



United States Department of Agriculture

Farm Service Agency Strategic Plan

Fiscal Year 2016-2018 Update



Message from the Administrator



Famous entrepreneur and business leader Herb Kelleher, once said, “We have a strategic plan. It’s called doing things”. While I support the spirit of that approach wholeheartedly, I believe that effective strategic planning sets the tone and direction of any organization that commits to the process. This year, FSA has made that commitment and updated its Strategic Plan to align the goals and objectives with the 2014 Farm Bill and the revised USDA strategic plan. The update contains new operational strategies designed to assure the highest level of customer service FSA can offer to America’s farmers and ranchers. In order to strengthen the economic safety net for America’s agricultural producers, FSA is transforming our operations and instilling a culture of continuous improvement. We take great pride in having

incredible employees at all levels of our Agency who have set a high bar for customer care, and localized, personal service. Yet, the Agency faces a high rate of retirements in the coming years at a time when our field offices anchor many small communities. These changes are taking place in a budgetary environment that is increasingly challenging today and in the future.

Information technology (IT) is an important investment, which allows us to do our jobs more efficiently and effectively. Developing a more modern and reliable IT infrastructure will eliminate manual calculations, reduce duplicative time consuming processes, and make administrative work less burdensome while offering a higher level of service to our Nation’s farmers and ranchers.

The updated 2016-2018 Strategic Plan was formulated through a dynamic process that equips the Agency to continually assess the quality of our services and achieve the best results for America. Our commitment to performance outcomes and results helps FSA make meaningful management decisions and programmatic adjustments while holding to proven approaches that better support our current and future customers.

Val Dolcini
Administrator

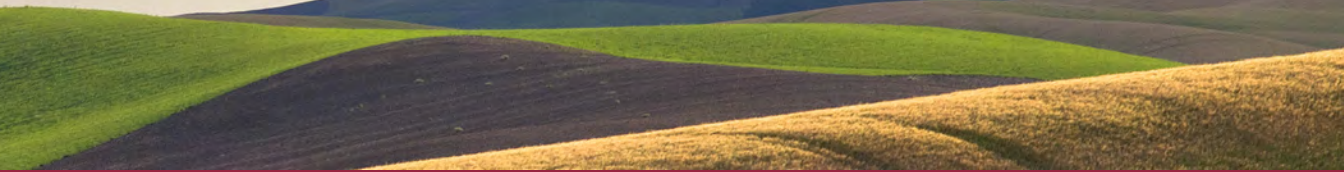


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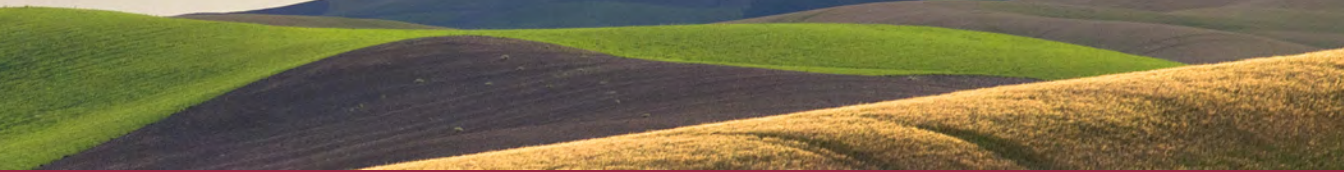
Strategic Plan Overview

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) traces its roots to the Great Depression when the Farm Security Administration was established. The Agency's name and mission has changed over the years, but FSA's commitment to America's farmers and ranchers has remained constant. Today, FSA plays a crucial role in supporting rural prosperity, improving the environment, eliminating hunger internationally, and contributing to U.S. national security by helping to ensure a safe and abundant food supply.

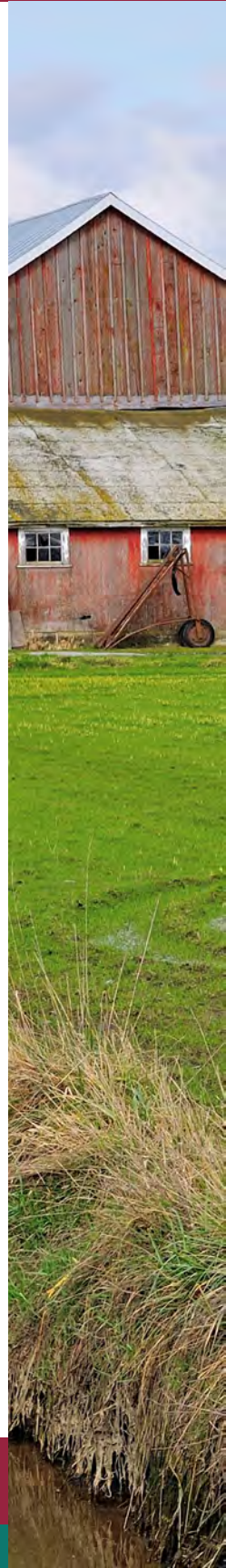
FSA's strategic goals are to:

1. Provide a financial safety net for America's farmers and ranchers to sustain economically viable agricultural production (**Goal 1**);
2. Increase stewardship of America's natural resources while enhancing the environment (**Goal 2**);
3. Ensure commodities are procured and distributed effectively and efficiently to increase food security (**Goal 3**);
4. Accomplish our mission by effectively managing people and service capabilities (**Goal 4**).

The first three goals address the Agency's major programmatic policies and cover the programs and services that FSA provides. Goal 4 emphasizes FSA's plan to achieve the agency's mission through engaged workforce development and expanded business efficiencies.



Performance measures will track progress in attaining certain key objectives as well as overarching strategic goals. Measures specify baseline information and long-term performance targets. Strategies describe the actions necessary to accomplish the agency’s goals and objectives. The external factors highlight the potential risks and challenges that may influence the accomplishment of goals and objectives.

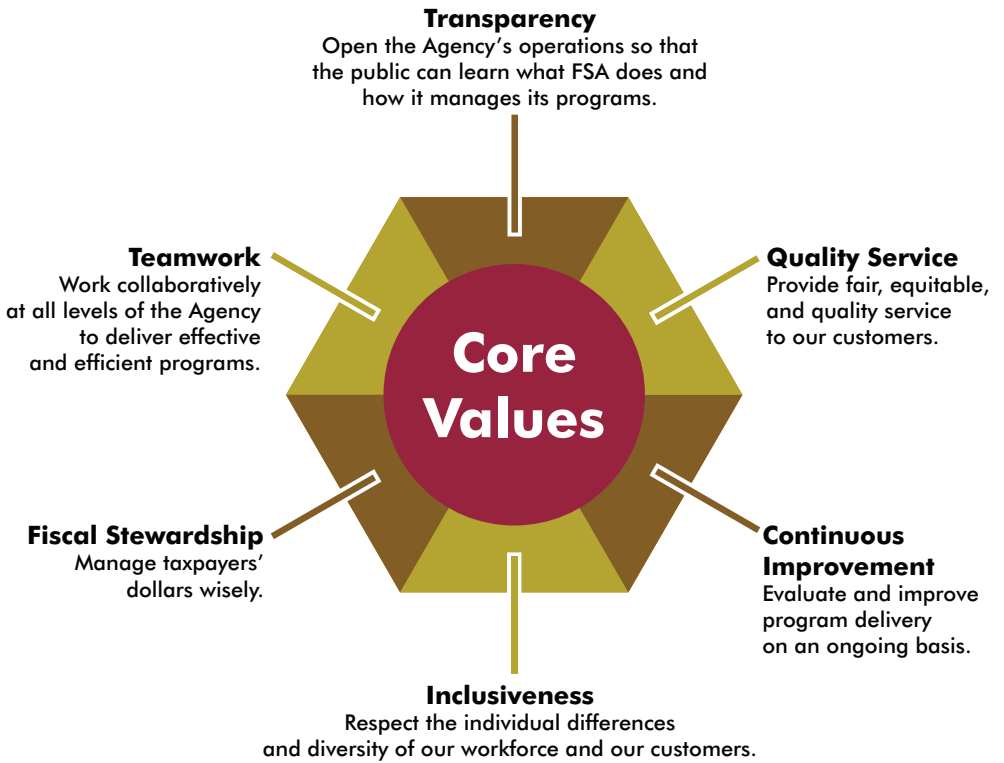


Mission Statement

To serve our nation’s farmers and ranchers professionally, efficiently, equitably, and in a manner that is customer, taxpayer, and employee friendly.

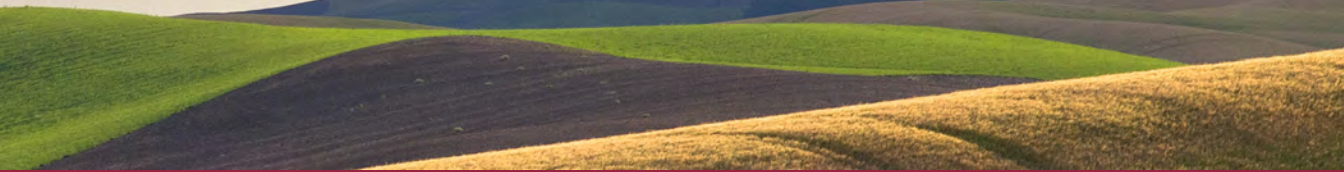
Vision Statement

“We keep America’s agriculture growing.”



External Risk Factors

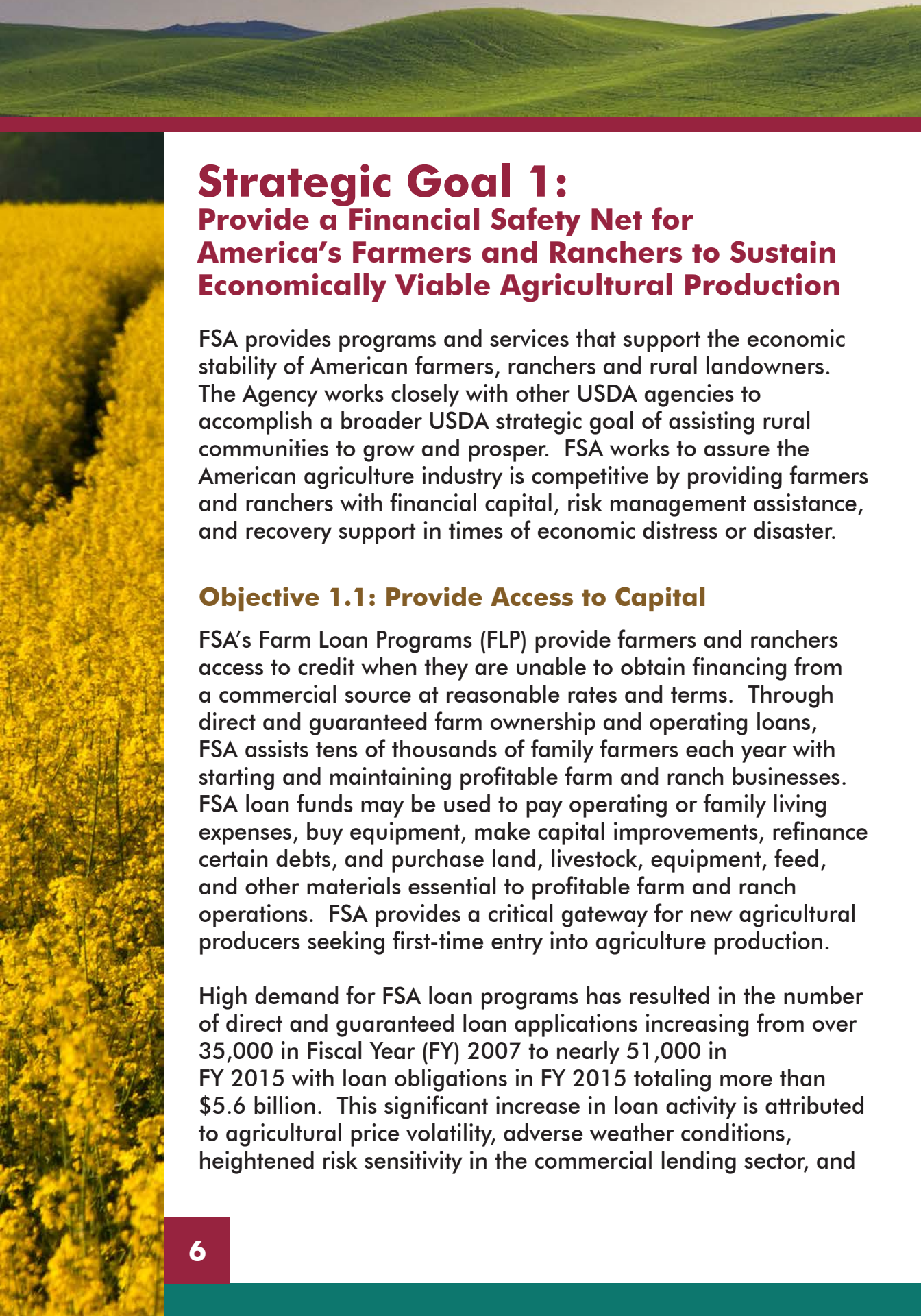
External factors that may influence accomplishment of the Strategic Goals 1 and 2 include widespread or prolonged natural disasters and animal, plant pest, and human disease outbreaks. FSA's ability to achieve its goals may be hindered by fluctuating commodity prices; renewal of expiring Conservation Reserve Program contracts and non-compliance with program provisions that may reduce program effectiveness.



The accomplishment of Strategic Goal 3 may be impacted by the availability and security of international transportation services and a lack of collaboration between the international public and private sectors that play a large role in food safety, security, and emergency preparedness. Other factors might include natural disasters, civil unrest in foreign countries, acceptance of new production technologies, and country infrastructure limitations.

Goal 4 addresses FSA's internal operations. Key factors that influence Goal 4 achievement include limitations of financial and human resources to pursue these initiatives, the availability of qualified candidates and their desire to relocate, and the inability to meet customer demand for technology-based communication tools that have not been adopted for use by FSA.





Strategic Goal 1:

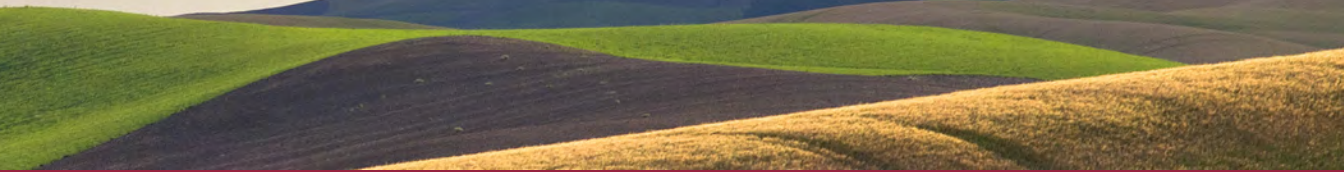
Provide a Financial Safety Net for America's Farmers and Ranchers to Sustain Economically Viable Agricultural Production

FSA provides programs and services that support the economic stability of American farmers, ranchers and rural landowners. The Agency works closely with other USDA agencies to accomplish a broader USDA strategic goal of assisting rural communities to grow and prosper. FSA works to assure the American agriculture industry is competitive by providing farmers and ranchers with financial capital, risk management assistance, and recovery support in times of economic distress or disaster.

Objective 1.1: Provide Access to Capital

FSA's Farm Loan Programs (FLP) provide farmers and ranchers access to credit when they are unable to obtain financing from a commercial source at reasonable rates and terms. Through direct and guaranteed farm ownership and operating loans, FSA assists tens of thousands of family farmers each year with starting and maintaining profitable farm and ranch businesses. FSA loan funds may be used to pay operating or family living expenses, buy equipment, make capital improvements, refinance certain debts, and purchase land, livestock, equipment, feed, and other materials essential to profitable farm and ranch operations. FSA provides a critical gateway for new agricultural producers seeking first-time entry into agriculture production.

High demand for FSA loan programs has resulted in the number of direct and guaranteed loan applications increasing from over 35,000 in Fiscal Year (FY) 2007 to nearly 51,000 in FY 2015 with loan obligations in FY 2015 totaling more than \$5.6 billion. This significant increase in loan activity is attributed to agricultural price volatility, adverse weather conditions, heightened risk sensitivity in the commercial lending sector, and




FSA's efforts to reach out to beginning and underserved farmers and ranchers. Looking forward, the demand for FSA direct and guaranteed lending is expected to remain strong.

FSA is committed to serving all farmers and ranchers and the Agency places an emphasis on meeting the credit needs of beginning and underserved (i.e., minorities, ethnic groups, and women) farmers and ranchers. Beginning and underserved producers typically operate smaller farms, have less equity, or lack sufficient credit or production history to access traditional commercial capital. FSA initiated new efforts to reach out to these demographic groups which resulted in increased lending through both the Direct and Guaranteed programs. Over the 10-year period from 2005 to 2014, FSA provided more than 138,000 beginning farmer loans and nearly 57,000 loans to underserved farmers and ranchers. During FY 2015, two-thirds of all loans were issued to beginning and underserved farmers providing more than \$3 billion in loan assistance. By comparison, during FY 2000 total lending to beginning and underserved farmers and ranchers was \$995 million.

FSA's Microloan Program, implemented in FY 2013 and enhanced by the Agricultural Act of 2014 (2014 Farm Bill), improves FSA's ability to assist beginning and underserved farmers and ranchers as well as military veterans interested in a career in agriculture. Microloans are available for up to \$50,000 and offer a streamlined application process with reduced paperwork. The program aims to bolster the progress of producers through their start-up years by providing resources to establish and build equity so they may eventually graduate to commercial credit and expand operations. Microloans are proving to be an important source of financing for those who grow niche crops for direct sales to ethnic and local farmers' markets. In its first full year of operation, more than 80 percent



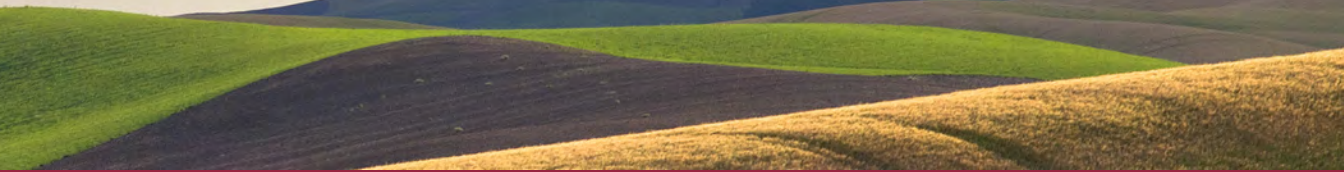


of Microloans went to beginning farmers, the underserved, and military veterans.

The Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program offers low-interest financing to producers seeking to improve their storage and handling facilities. Since FY 2000, FSA has issued more than 34,000 FSFLs valued at more than \$2 billion which has provided storage capacity for nearly 900 million bushels of eligible commodities. Significant growth in FSA's on-farm storage program is expected over the next few years. Upgrading farm storage and handling enables producers to benefit from new marketing options and expand sales in broader geographic markets.

Strategy 1: Increase Lending to Beginning and Underserved Farmers and Ranchers

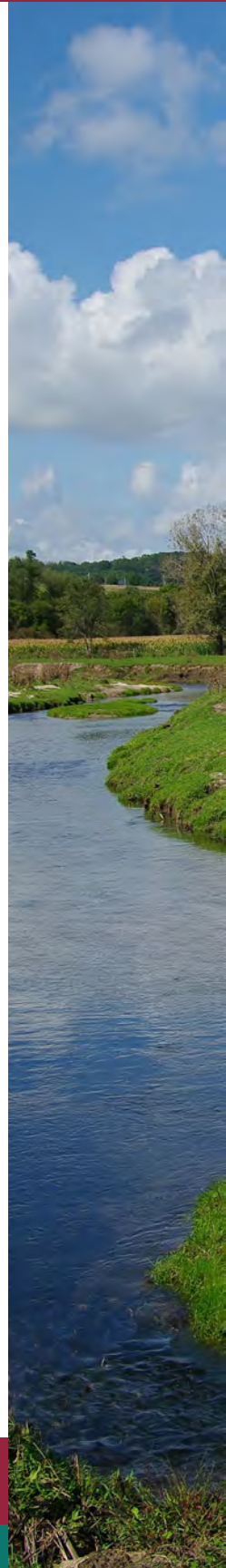
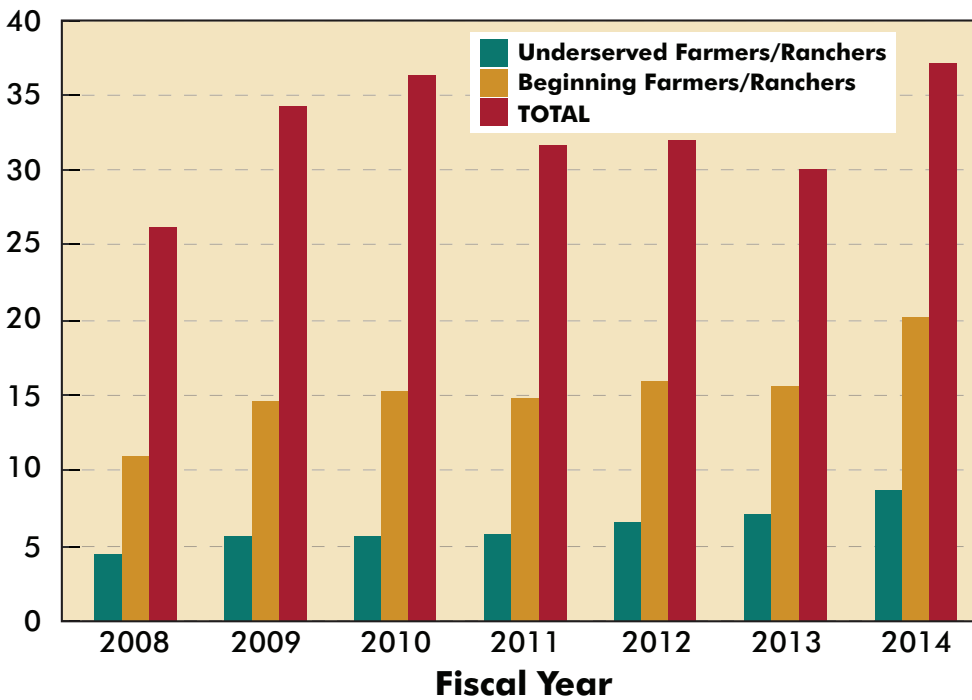
FSA is developing innovative loan products and initiatives to improve its ability to serve traditionally underserved farmers and ranchers. First, to expand the availability of the guaranteed loan program the Agency is creating a Guaranteed Microloan program for non-traditional lenders that will be delivered in partnership with Community Development Financial Institutions which serve low income people and communities that lack access to affordable financial products and services. The second new product is a Farm Ownership Microloan program which will target small farm operations catering to the local food and niche markets. FSA is also developing a new initiative for its Youth Loan program which focuses on youth living in urban areas. FSA has also initiated efforts to expand credit in areas where there are few lenders or where cultural or economic conditions limit the availability of credit.



FSA continues to work with partner organizations nationwide to provide agriculture training opportunities to beginning and underserved producers many of whom seek to farm as part of their cultural heritage or to enter the field for the first time using new techniques and technologies for bringing their products to consumers.

Providing Access to Capital FSA Loans Obligated

In Thousands



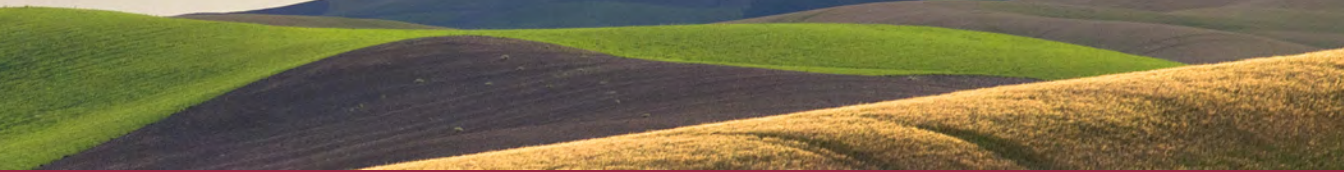


Strategy 2: Increase Analytics Capability

FSA recently completed the FLP “Data Mart” to strengthen its program analytics and reporting capabilities while the deployment of all FLP applications to a Web environment ensures consistent, centralized system upgrades and maintenance and reduced hardware costs. Periodic upgrades to the Direct Loan System (DLS) and Guaranteed Loan System (GLS) will expand their capabilities and performance. With emphasis on organic and non-traditional or specialty agriculture enterprises, FSA uses resources made available from its partner land grant universities and extension services with their networks of trained agricultural agents and specialists who are available nationwide to assist producers with instituting new production methods. These specialists are often called upon by borrowers and local FSA loan officers to assist in both the latest production practices and in developing accurate farm business plans.

Strategy 3: Improve Loan Processing and Servicing

Timely implementation is a key element to the success of every farm or ranch. Over the past decade to better meet producer needs, FSA has improved the efficiency of loan processing for both direct and guaranteed loans. While FSA continues to prioritize loan processing timeliness, the extensive analysis required for producer operations that are unable to get credit elsewhere coupled with the high volume of loan activity managed by local offices suggests that maintaining current loan processing performance will be a challenge. An initiative underway that will result in further loan application process efficiencies and a better customer experience is an interactive, web-based loan application tool that will interface with the direct loan system. The software will provide step-by-step guided instructions and questions that will walk a customer through the loan application process. Loan information entered will be prefilled to loan application forms.



FSA continues to ensure program effectiveness through completion of scheduled loan servicing activities that include chattel inspections, year-end operational analysis, security instrument servicing, and ensuring proper disposition of collateral when necessary. These efforts help assure public funds are well managed and Agency resources are directed in the most efficient way possible. The same factors that affect the timeliness of loan making activities also affect loan servicing capabilities.

Strategy 4: Expand Marketing Opportunities Through On-farm Storage

FSA works with producers who want to expand their marketing opportunities through construction of on-farm storage. The FSFL program provides valuable support to ensure producers have adequate storage capacity for commodities by providing low-interest financing to build or upgrade permanent farm storage and handling facilities. Eligible commodities include major feed grains, oilseeds, peanuts, pulse crops, hay, renewable biomass (certain commodities, plants and trees), fruits and vegetables, aquaculture, floriculture, hops, milk, rye, meat and poultry, eggs, butter, cheese, and yogurt.

Small and beginning farmers and ranchers and specialty crop producers are benefiting from recent changes to the FSFL program. FSA has added 23 new categories of eligible equipment for fruit and vegetable producers including food safety equipment, wash stations and storage bins. FSFL security requirements have also been eased for loans \$100,000 or less, and waivers are considered on a case-by-case basis for non-insured disaster assistance or multi-peril insurance coverage.



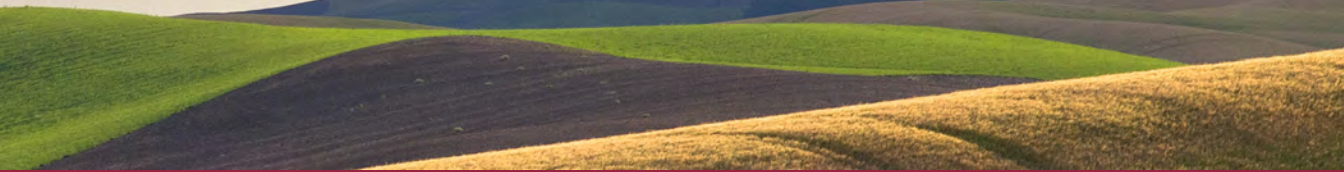


Objective 1.2: Support Economic Viability

FSA works to strengthen the economic viability of the general agriculture sector by providing eligible agricultural commodity producers with income support payments, disaster assistance, and marketing assistance loans. These programs help farmers and ranchers manage financial risks associated with commodity price fluctuations and respond to unpredictable weather events.

The 2014 Farm Bill made significant changes to many FSA programs. Several programs were eliminated, including the Direct and Counter Cyclical Payment Program and the Average Crop Revenue Election Program. The new safety net programs for 2014 – 2018 crops are Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC). ARC offers coverage to producers who want revenue shortfall (yield times price) protection while PLC offers protection to producers against price declines. ARC and PLC payments are determined, in most cases, using a farm's historical base acres and producers chose between ARC (either a county-based or individual-based program) and PLC options. The 2014 Farm Bill provides that the one time election decision will remain in effect for that farm through 2018 crops. A producer elected either county-coverage ARC or PLC on a crop-by-crop basis within the farm. If individual coverage ARC was chosen, then every covered commodity on the farm must participate in individual coverage ARC. Nearly 1.8 million farms are enrolled in ARC/PLC.

In addition to the new crop safety net programs, the 2014 Farm Bill authorized the Margin Protection Program for Dairy (MPP-Dairy) which is a voluntary risk management program for dairy operations. MPP-Dairy offers protection to dairy operations when the difference between the all milk price and the average feed cost (the margin) falls below a certain dollar amount selected by the producer. The program offers multiple coverage levels



to accommodate dairy operations of all sizes and production levels. MPP-Dairy is a unique safety net program to help dairy operations manage financial risks associated with market conditions.

FSA's income support options provide producers the flexibility of selecting the program that best fits their needs. For example, Marketing Assistance Loans (MALs) provide producers interim financing to meet cash flow needs without having to sell their commodities when market prices are lower which also enables more consistent marketing of commodities throughout the year. Benefits can also be taken directly as a loan deficiency payment (LDP) which is a cash payment equal to the difference between the loan rate and the loan repayment rate. Over the past ten years, more than 2.7 million MALs and LDPs were issued to producers with a valuation of nearly \$83 billion.

Cotton, peanut, and grain producers are offered expanded options to market their crops and earn maximum returns on their investments through FSA-approved Cooperative Marketing Associations, Loan Servicing Agents, and Designated Marketing Associations who obtain MALs and LDPs from FSA and disburse them to producers that are members of the associations.

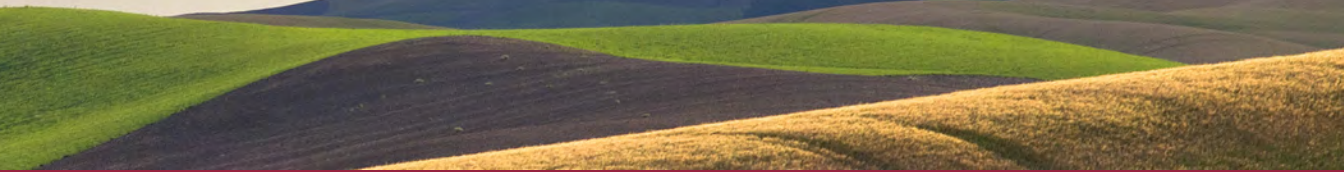
Disaster assistance programs offer financial support to crop and livestock producers affected by drought, flood, hurricanes, and other natural disasters. FSA assists producers in recovering from losses and restoring their lands through programs such as the Emergency Conservation Program and Emergency Loan Program as well as through four disaster programs authorized by the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 which were indefinitely extended by the 2014 Farm Bill.





The four programs include the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP), the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP), the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm Raised Fish Program (ELAP), and the Tree Assistance Program (TAP). LFP provides compensation to eligible livestock producers that have suffered grazing losses due to drought or fire. LIP provides benefits to livestock producers for livestock deaths in excess of normal mortality caused by adverse weather or attacks by predators introduced into the wild by the Federal government. ELAP provides emergency assistance for losses due to disease, adverse weather, or other conditions such as blizzards and wildfires. TAP provides financial assistance to qualifying orchardists and nursery tree growers to replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes, and vines damaged by natural disasters. These four programs are a significant part of USDA's farm safety net with more than \$5.7 billion in assistance provided for losses since October 2011.

The 2014 Farm Bill significantly revised the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP). NAP is a risk management program that reduces financial losses when natural disasters prevent planting or cause a producer to suffer loss of production or value of a non-insurable crop. Prior to the 2014 Farm Bill, NAP offered basic coverage at 55 percent of the average market price for crop losses that exceeded 50 percent of expected production. Producers now have the option to purchase higher levels of coverage up to 65 percent of expected production at 100 percent of the market price. The expanded protection is especially helpful to beginning, limited resource, and underserved producers who receive fee waivers and premium



reductions for expanded coverage. In addition, more crops are now eligible for the program including expanded aquaculture production practices, sweet and biomass sorghum, and a range of crops used in bioenergy conversion. These changes are expected to expand program participation. At the end of FY 2015, there were nearly 53,000 crops with basic NAP coverage and more than 3,800 crops with additional buy-up coverage.

Strategy 1: Increase Program Participation

The 2014 Farm Bill emphasizes a robust set of risk management, income support, and disaster assistance programs that enable producers to be proactive in protecting their farm enterprises. Increasing participation in these programs contributes to economic stability and reduces short-term income volatility. To educate producers and optimize producer participation, FSA conducts outreach through its network of State and local offices, working cooperatively with the Risk Management Agency (RMA), the Cooperative Extension Service, university partners, and other USDA Agencies.



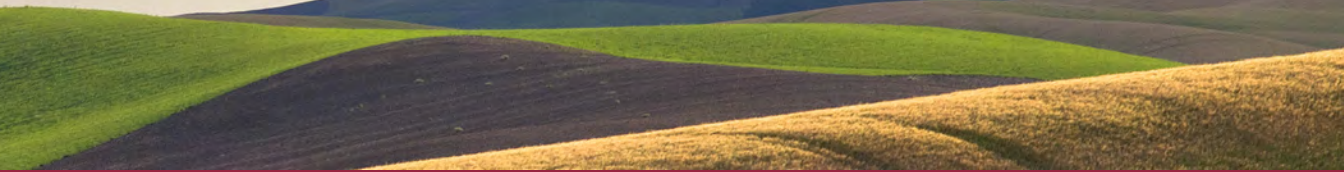


Strategy 2: Improve Program Delivery

FSA is enhancing customer access to its income support and risk management programs through improved education and training of its personnel. To improve program delivery, national training was provided to build efficiencies delivering the new Farm Bill programs.

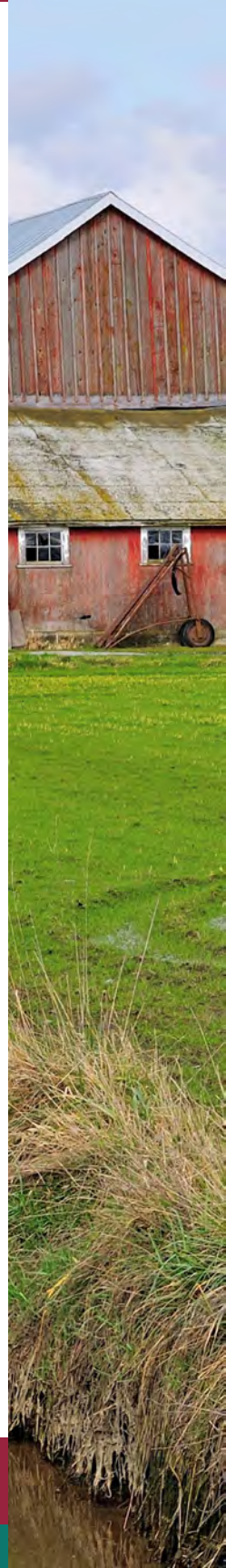
The Agency is also advancing the use of web-based technologies to expand and improve agriculture producers' access to new FSA programs and decision tools. For example, the new web-based Commodity Loan Processing System deployed in 2015 will allow commodity loan applicants to apply for financing directly from their farm using their farm personal computer, tablet, or smartphone.

FSA is partnering with RMA to implement the Acreage Crop Reporting Streamlining Initiative (ACRSI). ACRSI is a major process improvement initiative that will simplify and standardize data reporting requirements such as production, planted and harvested acreage, and other key program participation information while also reducing administrative and operating costs by sharing similar data across participating agencies. ACRSI will allow automated reporting using a customer's farm management or precision agriculture systems.



Strategy 3: Increase Analytics Capability

FSA is enhancing the performance of its income support and risk management programs through the design of web-based analytic tools. Improved analytics will provide more comprehensive program information that will improve decision making capabilities that result in improved program management. The new web based enhancements will provide a means to select and view measurable transaction based program information by loan type, by commodity type, and by geographic region. It will also record the number of the number of new and beginning farmer and underserved program applicants.



Strategic Goal 1 - Performance Measures

Description	2014 Baseline	2018 Target
Percentage of beginning and underserved producers financed through Direct Loan and Guaranteed Loan Programs	40.8%	41%
Average number of days to process direct loans	26 days	26 days
Average number of days to process guaranteed loans	9 days	9 days
Number of FSFL facilities	1,722	2,250
Number of Dairy Operations participating in MPP	24,748	25,500
Average number of days to process MALs	6 days	4 days
Number of producers receiving MALs	115,000	130,000
Number of producers receiving LDPs	75,000	150,000
Average number of days to process LIP payments	15 days	12 days
Average number of days to process LFP payments	7 days	5 days
Number of Farms enrolled in ARC/PLC	1.6M ¹	1.76M
Number of crops with buy-up coverage (combined total for all coverage levels)	3,434	3,600
The number of producers enrolled with continuous NAP coverage	51,527	52,500

¹ The ARC/PLC enrollment baseline reflects the total number of DCP enrolled farms as of 2013.



Strategic Goal 2: **Increase Stewardship of America's Natural Resources while Enhancing the Environment**

FSA's conservation and environmental programs play an important role in helping protect and restore America's farms, ranches, and grasslands while making them more resilient to threats and enhancing natural resources. The programs affect the public at large due to their positive impacts on drinking water, greenhouse gas emissions, recreation, community health, and economic prosperity. FSA works with private landowners and managers to restore vegetative cover, rehabilitate streams and other water bodies, transition marginal or highly-erosive lands to sustainable production levels, and apply conservation measures to enhance and maintain the quality of soil, water, and related natural resources and wildlife.

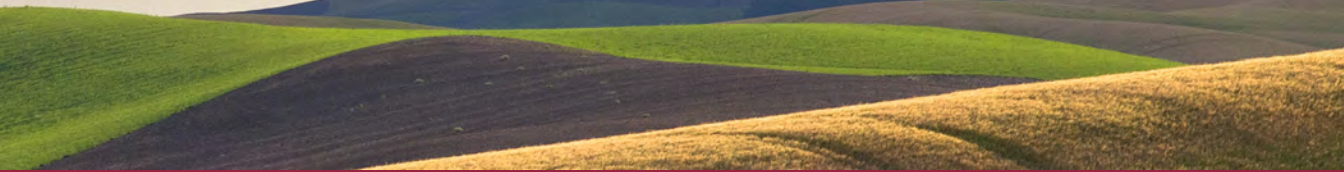
Objective 2.1: Provide Resource Stewardship Opportunities on Private Lands

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is America's premier voluntary conservation program designed to protect and restore fragile natural resources. Producers enrolled in CRP plant long-term, resource-conserving covers to improve the quality of water, control erosion, enhance wildlife habitat, or establish or maintain grasslands under CRP grassland provisions. In return for their efforts, FSA provides enrollees with rental payments and cost-share assistance for up to 10 to 15 years. At the end of FY 2015, there were 24.2 million acres under CRP contract. Based on the 2014 Farm Bill, FSA anticipates 24 million acres, the statutory limit on enrollment, will be under contract between FY 2015 – 2018 as more acres are expected to return to production.



CRP offers financial and ownership benefits to beginning and underserved farmers and ranchers, military veterans, retired landowners, and agriculture producers through the Transition Incentives Program (TIP). TIP provides retiring land owners and farm or ranch operators with two supplemental rent payments annually on land enrolled in soon-to-expire CRP contracts under the condition they sell or rent the land to a beginning farmer or rancher, military veteran, or to an underserved producer when they retire. New land owners or renters who participate in TIP must keep or return the land to production using sustainable grazing or farming methods. Since the implementation of TIP in 2010, contracts covering 376,000 acres have been transitioned to beginning and underserved farmers and ranchers.

FSA partners with State governments, national conservation groups, other Federal agencies, and agricultural producers to increase stewardship opportunities that protect drinking water, preserve grasslands, and enhance wildlife habitat. To participate, producers must maintain their conservation plans developed with assistance from their State forestry agencies or the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). A key goal of a conservation plan is to reduce soil erosion and subsequent sedimentation. In FY 2015, FSA enrolled 215,000 acres of private land for wetland restoration and more than 86,000 acres to devote to conservation buffers. This program has broad national support and serves as a win-win for the USDA, State Agriculture and Wildlife Departments, conservationists, and landowners nationwide.



Strategy 1: Develop CRP Initiatives to Address Emerging Critical Issues

CRP has shifted rapidly from enrolling entire farms and fields to partial-field practices including riparian buffers, field-edge filter strips, grassed waterways, and wetland restoration. Through CRP, FSA supports producers that provide needed honey bee habitat, adopt measures to improve water quality in the Chesapeake Bay, and provide critical habitat for at-risk wildlife species.

The CRP Honey Bee Initiative announced in 2014 will provide \$8 million in targeted incentives for CRP participants to enhance existing cover to promote honey bee forage habitat. FSA is also working with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and State governments to assure the CRP is effectively targeting habitat to protect and expand lesser prairie chicken. These practices are expected to provide greater environmental benefits on a per-acre basis than whole farm or field enrollments.

Strategy 2: Maintain the Amount of Acreage of Wetlands Restored, Constructed, Protected, and Created

Wetlands serve many critical functions including as natural filters to improve water quality, stored water to reduce flooding, a source of groundwater supply, and wildlife habitat. Constructed wetlands are a cost-effective means to reduce nitrogen loadings from drained agricultural land and assist in wildlife migration. The USFWS estimates that FSA's wetland restoration and conservation efforts in the Prairie Pothole region in the north central U.S. have increased annual duck migration by over 1.5 million birds and increased annual grassland bird populations by nearly 10 million.



To assure effective implementation of its wetland program, FSA works with NRCS, EPA, U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, USFWS, and State agencies. FSA will utilize, where appropriate, constructed wetlands to address water quality issues associated with excessive nutrients.

Wetlands in CRP

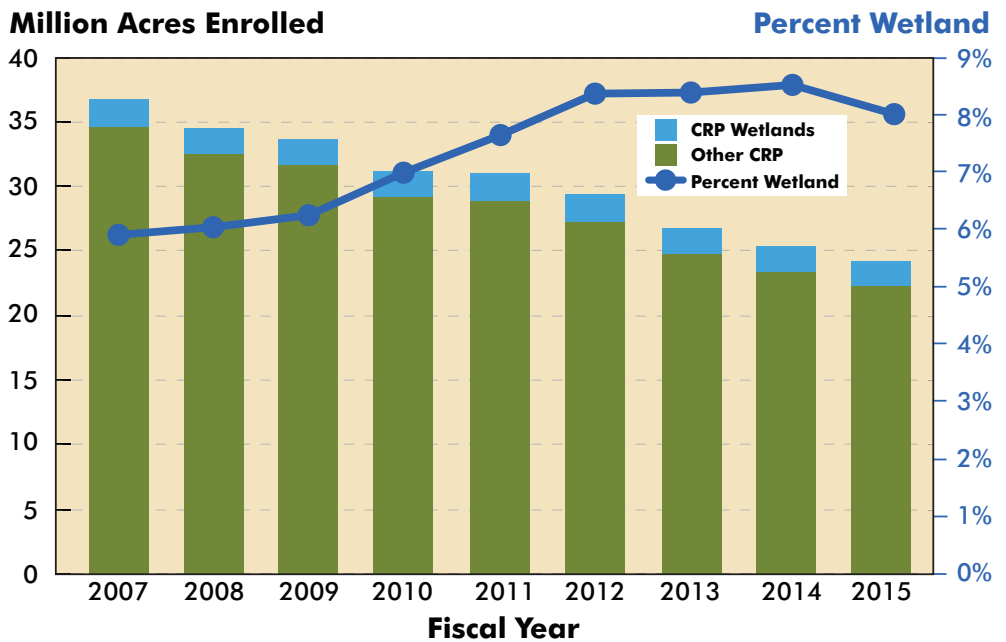
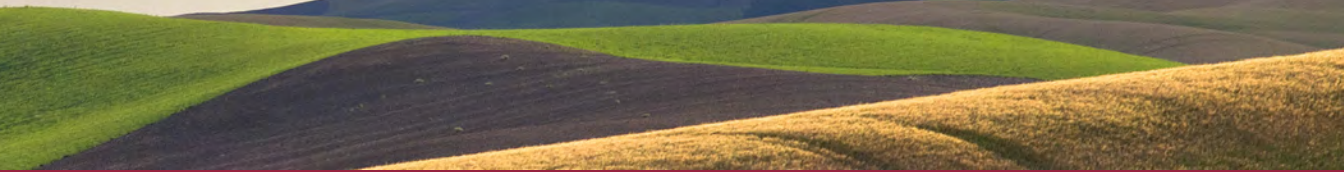


Figure 2: Provided by the FSA Economic Policy and Analysis Staff



Strategy 3: Prevent and Reduce Soil Erosion

The U.S. agricultural industry has made significant strides in improving farming practices to decrease soil erosion in recent decades. However, soil erosion continues to be an issue within the U.S. as approximately 1.7 billion tons of soil erodes each year from cropland (by comparison, in 1982 soil erosion was 3.1 billion tons). Close to 100 million acres of cropland is eroding above the level (generally 5 tons per acre per year) required to maintain the long-term productive capacity of the land. Soil erosion (sediment) is a leading cause of water impairment of our Nation's rivers and streams. This sediment alone is harmful to aquatic ecosystems but nitrogen and phosphorus bound to soil particles may also cause impairment when released to the environment.

Nationwide, participation in the CRP has reduced soil erosion by an estimated 300 million tons per year. To narrow the focus to areas where problems exist, the CRP targets highly erodible land when landowners sign up for the program. In 2012, FSA developed and implemented the Highly Erodible Lands Initiative that targeted cropland with soils that have the highest propensity to erode. As of FY 2015, over 256,000 acres have been enrolled. The most cost-effective means to address impacts associated with erosion for many highly erodible acres is through conversion of the land to permanent vegetation.





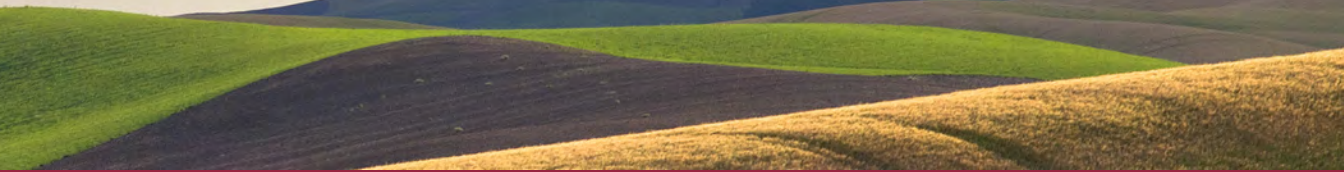
Strategy 4: Combat Invasive Species

When invasive (also referred to as “non-native”) species are introduced in a region, they can create negative economic and environmental impacts. An analysis completed in 2004 estimated that invasive plant species cause an estimated \$40 billion per year in economic damage. In many parts of the Western United States, invasive species have significantly altered the ecosystem.

To address this issue, FSA works with private landowners and program participants to boost their efforts to combat noxious and invasive species in compliance with the President’s Executive Order on invasive species. Early detection and systematic control of noxious weeds is an effective approach to reduce the cost of invasive species control and enhance the long-term productivity of the land.

Strategy 5: Maintain Acreage in CRP Riparian Buffers and Filterstrips

An effective means to protect rivers and streams is through the use of vegetative barriers of grass referred as “filterstrips” and trees referred as “riparian buffers.” Filterstrips and buffers capture and trap sediment, nutrients, pesticides, and pathogens, preventing them from entering streams, and lower water temperatures. Buffers improve aquatic species’ habitat and helps to reduce the impact of flooding. FSA works with producers, government agencies, and private partners to expand the use of filterstrips and buffers to address water quality and wildlife concerns. FSA also partners with State agencies and local governments in rural communities to promote the use of buffers to protect drinking water supplies and reduce treatment costs.

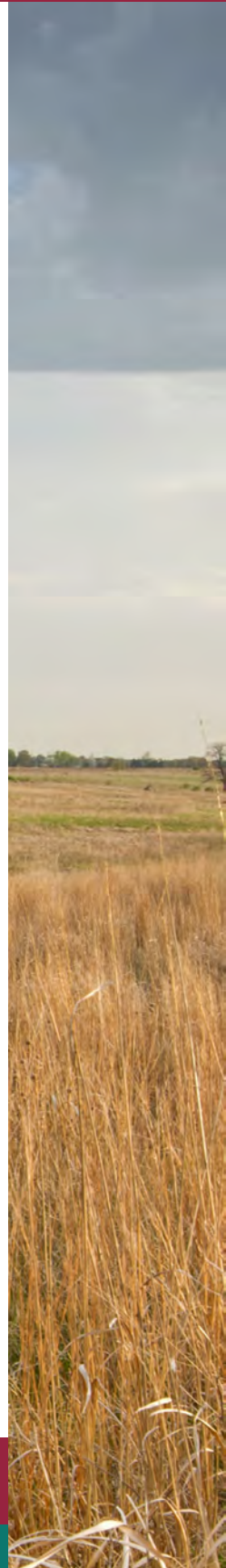


Strategy 6: Partner with State and Tribal Governments and Others to Promote Conservation

FSA is a supportive partner with State and Tribal Governments and other State and local agencies to help agricultural producers protect environmentally sensitive land, decrease erosion, restore wildlife habitat, and safeguard ground and surface water. The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is a partnership among producers, Federal agencies, Tribal and State governments, and in some cases private groups. There are currently 47 CREP projects in 34 States, representing a \$4.1 billion Federal, State, and private commitment of resources.

Strategy 7: Mitigate and Adapt to Climate Change

With 24 million acres enrolled in CRP, it is one of the largest voluntary programs to sequester greenhouse gases on private land. Close to 43 million metric tons of carbon dioxide were sequestered in the soil carbon and above ground vegetation in 2014. The long term impacts of climate change will impact the viability of various plant species. Changes in precipitation, growing season, and other factors will impact which species will be best suited for certain sites. Many new plantings (especially tree plantings) will likely have a projected lifespan of 50+ years. Ensuring the long term viability of the stand in light of expected impacts from climate change will be vital. FSA is working with NRCS, Forest Service (FS), and other support organizations to ensure the nation's planting requirements are best suited for long term sustainability.



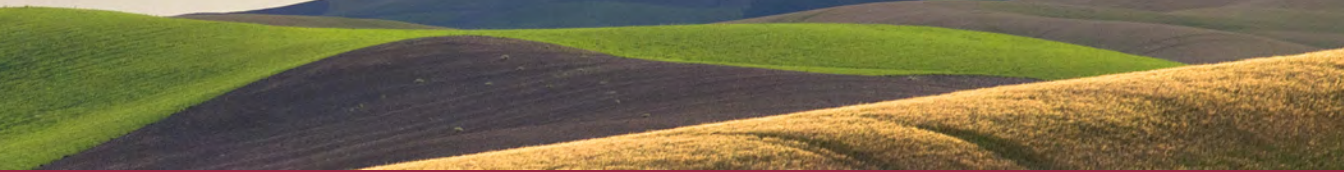


Objective 2.2: Target Natural Resource Needs to Maximize Benefits

FSA conservation programs have a significant impact on protecting our Nation's natural resources. Land protection programs provide a long-term approach to protecting soil, water, wildlife, and air quality, while enhancing recreational opportunities in rural America. FSA estimates that CRP has reduced phosphorus, nitrogen, and sediment loading by 108 million pounds, 542 million pounds per year, and 201 million tons, respectively in 2014.

Strategy 1: Develop and Implement Measures to Conserve Surface and Ground Water Supplies

The Nation's expanding population, greater variability in climate, and other factors place increased demand on water resources. Land conservation programs improve the availability of water resources. Land use changes from cropland to vegetative cover or wetlands increases the recharge of groundwater resources, reduces peak runoff, and improves the total availability of water for public use. FSA works with State and private partners to facilitate voluntary programs that encourage water conservation. FSA then targets full enrollment in CRP to maximize the potential impacts of improved hydrology through better overall land use management, and the expansion of CREPs to conserve water in drought prone regions.

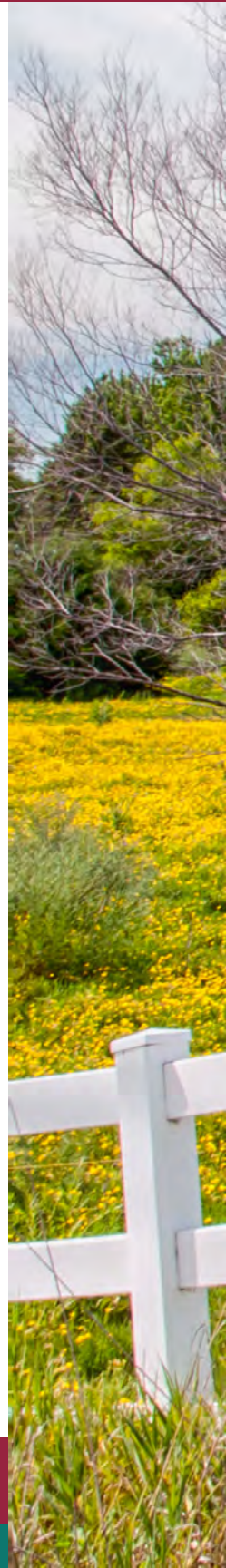


Strategy 2: Develop and Implement Approaches to Enhance Water Quality

FSA programs have improved water quality by targeting the most environmentally-sensitive land (i.e., flood plains, wetlands, highly erodible lands, and others) for land conservation practices. Through partnerships with State agencies, non-governmental organizations, and producers, FSA will continue its efforts to improve water quality.

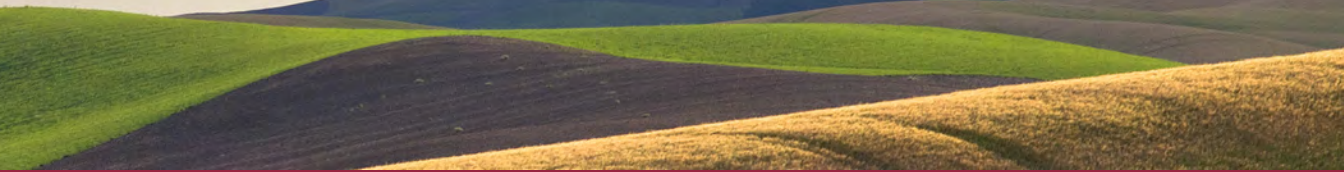
Strategy 3: Develop and Enhance Wildlife Habitat

FSA conservation programs and partnerships focus on the restoration of ecosystems that provide quality habitat for a number of wildlife species. In some CREPs, States have acquired long-term conservation easements to protect important habitats. FSA works with USFWS, State fish and wildlife agencies, environmental groups, and producer groups to address the protection of critical habitats. To date, 2 million acres of wetlands and wetland buffers have been enrolled, with many located in the Prairie Pothole region which is a vital breeding area for much of the central flyway waterfowl. CRP initiatives help producers' establish new nesting habitat for upland birds such as sage grouse and northern bobwhite quail. Studies show that these conservation practices have increased the population of upland bird species. Similarly, the 252,000 wetland acres restored by the Duck Habitat initiative have increased the 2014 duck population by an estimated 150,000 birds according to the U.S. Geological Survey and USFWS.



Strategic Goal 2 - Performance Measures

Description	2014 Baseline	2018 Target
Number of acres enrolled in CRP (millions)	25.4	24
Metric tons of greenhouse gas mitigation Million CO2 Equivalent	43	43
Number of acres of wetlands and wetland buffers enrolled (millions)	2.0	1.9



Strategic Goal 3: **Ensure Commodities are Procured and Distributed Effectively and Efficiently to Increase Food Security**

More than 800 million people worldwide suffer from hunger and malnutrition. Food aid addresses participating countries' hunger and helps to build longer term economic development that boosts trade opportunities for the United States and other countries. USDA's international food assistance programs play a critical role in this effort. FSA supports USDA's strategic objective to ensure U.S. agricultural resources contribute to enhanced global food security through its procurement, acquisition, storage, disposition, and distribution of commodities. FSA procures and distributes agricultural commodities for international distribution through programs like the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education Act, Food for Progress and Food for Peace programs. As one of several federal partners tasked with execution of these programs in FY 2014, FSA purchased commodities totaling 1,333,971 metric tons with a value of \$562,218,487.

FSA is committed to continuous improvement and streamlining of its internal processes to assure food continues to reach recipients on time and according to quality specifications. FSA is also committed to improving packaging requirements to reduce commodity losses incurred from multiple handling within distribution systems in lesser developed countries.





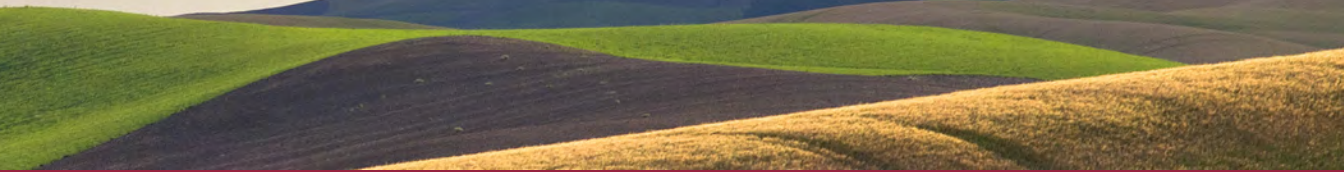
FSA is also increasing the transparency of its procurement practices and efficiencies within the food distribution system. The Agency will strengthen the integrity of the commodity procurement contracting process, including the design and delivery of Request for Proposals (RFPs) and Request for Quotes (RFQs). In addition, FSA will continue to identify and implement industry best practices to ensure food aid quality and security.

Objective 3.1: Enhance Procurement Practices for Commodity Purchases and Deliveries

The number of people receiving supplemental food assistance can be effected by the cost of commodities and transportation. As budget constraints further challenge the effort of purchasing commodities, FSA will assist by building new efficiencies in its purchasing and procurement practices. The Agency will seek the highest volume purchases available within the parameters of the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) while maintaining quality and food security standards set by the USDA and the Food and Drug Administration.

Strategy 1: Improve Procurement Processes

FSA is striving to better assist people in need and the program agencies that serve them through the use of “Best Value” contracting procedures. To promote transparency and accountability, FSA will improve procurement processes; including acquisition planning, contract formation, and contract administration.

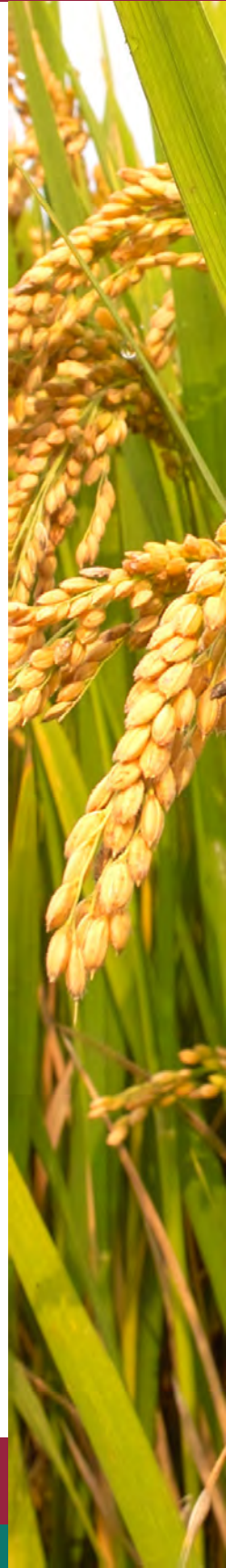


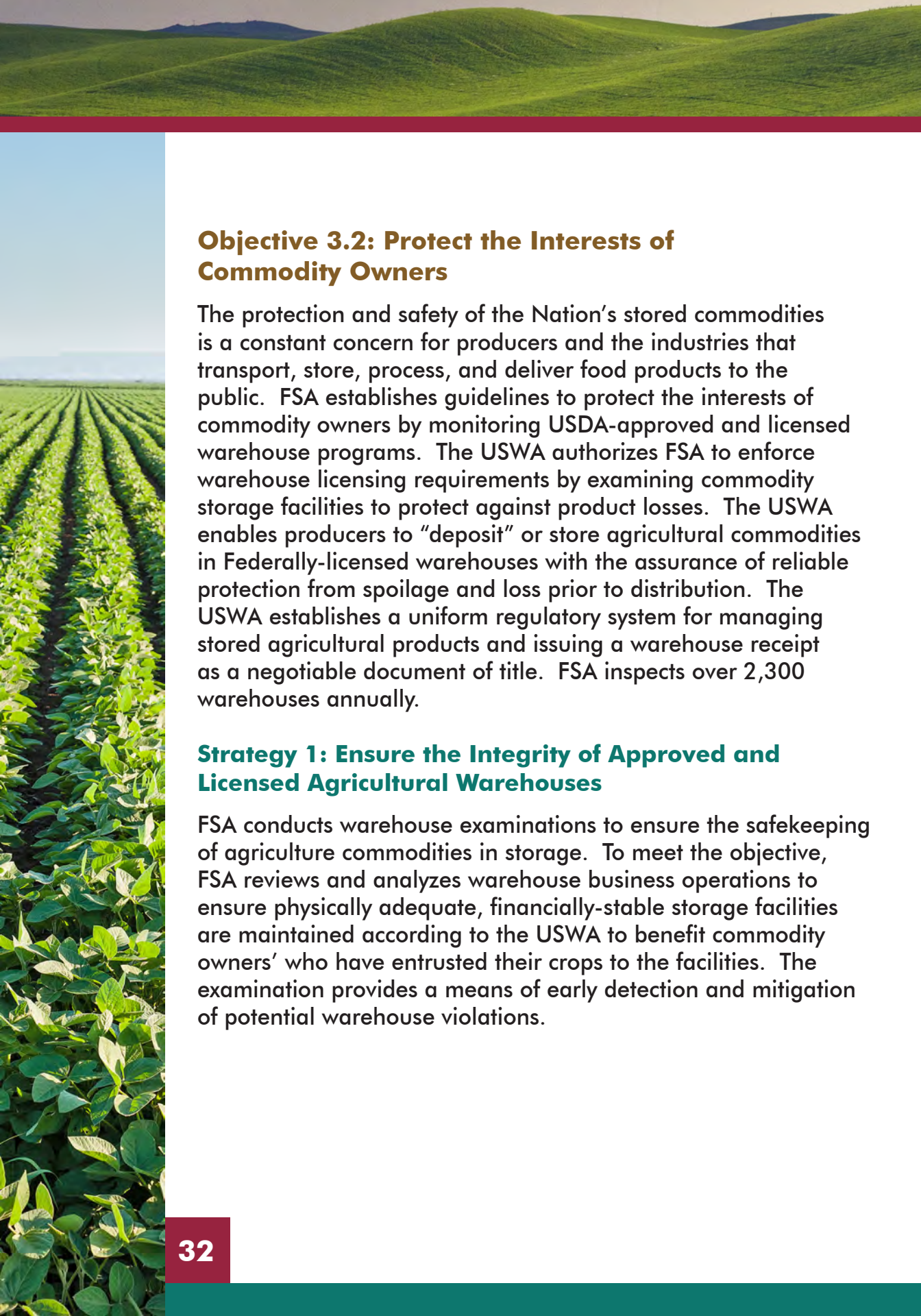
Strategy 2: Promote Competition for International Food Aid Contracts

FSA will reduce the cost of distributing food in order to reach more people in need by promoting competition for international food aid contracts. FSA will improve its outreach efforts by casting a wider, more competitive net to both traditional and non-traditional vendors to secure a larger pool of proposals. Increasing the vendor base will also reduce program risks by providing greater commodity production capacity during times of high demand and emergencies.

Strategy 3: Maintain Capability to Complete Independent Government Estimates (IGEs)

Conducting accurate IGEs is an essential component of ensuring FSA is efficiently utilizing taxpayer resources by confirming that the Government receives exactly what was specified, at a reasonable cost. Employing talented personnel and systems to effectively perform this task will contribute to lowering the average cost to feed recipients.



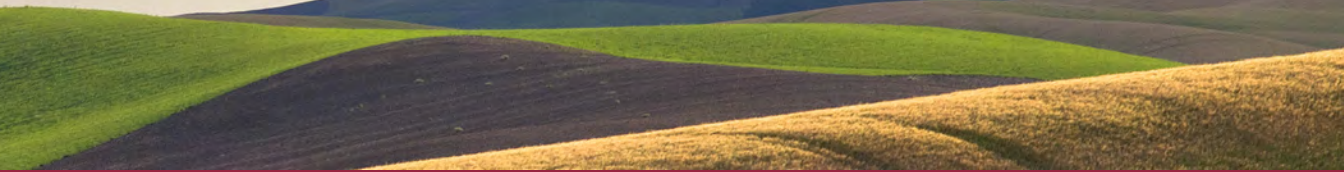


Objective 3.2: Protect the Interests of Commodity Owners

The protection and safety of the Nation’s stored commodities is a constant concern for producers and the industries that transport, store, process, and deliver food products to the public. FSA establishes guidelines to protect the interests of commodity owners by monitoring USDA-approved and licensed warehouse programs. The USWA authorizes FSA to enforce warehouse licensing requirements by examining commodity storage facilities to protect against product losses. The USWA enables producers to “deposit” or store agricultural commodities in Federally-licensed warehouses with the assurance of reliable protection from spoilage and loss prior to distribution. The USWA establishes a uniform regulatory system for managing stored agricultural products and issuing a warehouse receipt as a negotiable document of title. FSA inspects over 2,300 warehouses annually.

Strategy 1: Ensure the Integrity of Approved and Licensed Agricultural Warehouses

FSA conducts warehouse examinations to ensure the safekeeping of agriculture commodities in storage. To meet the objective, FSA reviews and analyzes warehouse business operations to ensure physically adequate, financially-stable storage facilities are maintained according to the USWA to benefit commodity owners’ who have entrusted their crops to the facilities. The examination provides a means of early detection and mitigation of potential warehouse violations.

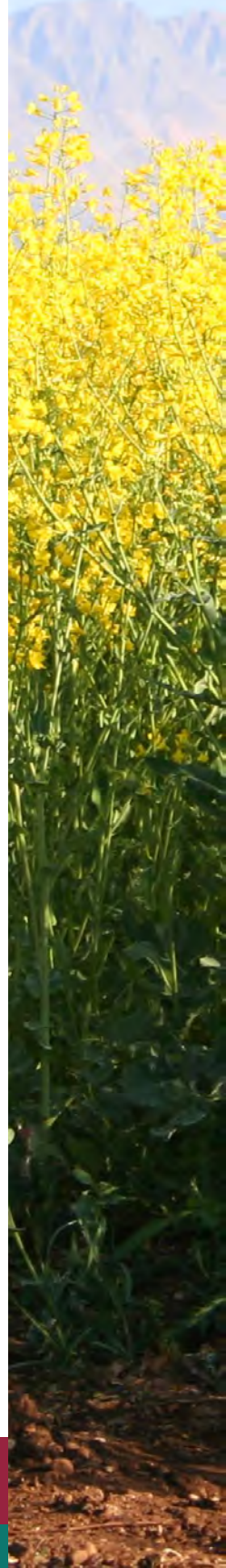


Strategy 2: Improve the Efficiency and Effectiveness of Warehouse Examinations

FSA will increase the frequency of warehouse inspections, though there are limitations due to budget constraints on the number of warehouse inspectors available in the field. To address this challenge, FSA will assign risk categories based on inspection findings to prioritize at risk facilities and improve the timing and delivery of warehouse examinations. FSA will participate in meetings and conferences with organizations such as the Association of Grain Regulatory Officials (AGRO) to ensure that warehouse examiners representing State licensing authorities are aware of USDA's expectations with regard to the examination of State licensed agricultural storage facilities.

Strategy 3: Establish a Food Security Plan Requirement

FSA requires approved and licensed commodity storage warehouses to conduct a facility vulnerability assessment and implement a security plan at their facilities. The purpose of the food security plan is to assist the agricultural warehouse industry in deterring potential agro-terrorism, to prepare for disasters or other emergencies, and to ensure the safety of our Nation's food supply.



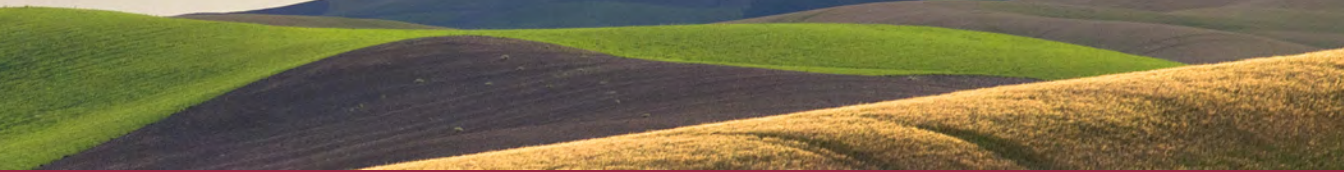


Objective 3.3: Improve the Quality and Security of Commodities Purchased for Food Assistance Programs

FSA ensures the safety and security of commodities purchased for international food aid programs. FSA is responsible for maintaining the quality and security of food purchased for shipment and delivery for distribution. Contracting specifications are in place to ensure that commodities are not adversely altered. The Agency monitors the nutritional value, shelf life, and stability of commodities accepted and delivered for distribution. To make certain the quality and security of commodities purchased meets applicable standards, the Agency will continue to focus on shipment and delivery of international food assistance and improve food quality and security procedures.

Strategy 1: Focus on Shipment and Delivery of International Food Assistance

There are numerous challenges in delivering international food aid, including natural disasters, civil unrest, cultural differences, production limitations, and, in situations where problems arise, contract and freight debt resolution. Typically, food aid is delivered to countries with immature infrastructures and traditional commercial packaging methods are often not sufficient to prevent damage or spoilage. FSA will continue to identify and specify industry best practices for commodity manufacturing and packaging to ensure food aid quality and security for both international food aid programs.



When commodities do not meet contract specifications, or issues arise in shipping products to overseas destinations, FSA will administratively settle claims so that funds can be returned to program agencies for reprogramming. If FSA is unable to administratively settle ocean transportation debts, they are referred to the Department of Justice for legal remedy.

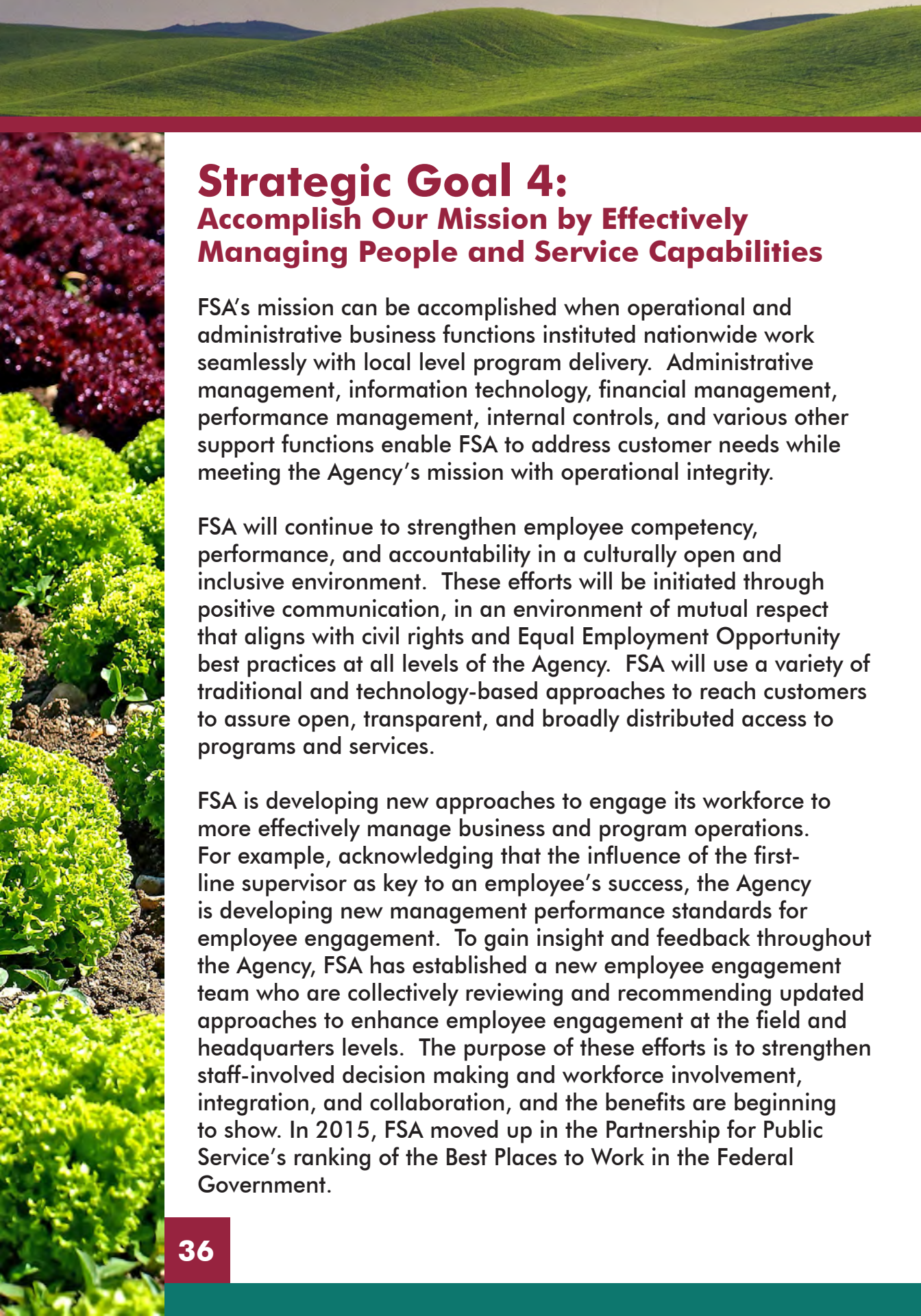
Strategy 2: Improve Food Quality and Security Procedures

FSA employs industry best practices to minimize the risks related to food safety and food insecurity. For example, industry best practices for sampling and testing commodities at manufacturing facilities will be incorporated into all FSA procurement contracts. Transportation conveyances must now be secured with tamper resistant, tamper evident seals to ensure the contents have not been compromised. In addition, a port licensing agreement is being developed so FSA can require stevedores to provide a heightened level of quality and safety for commodities at ports.



Strategic Goal 3 - Performance Measures

Description	2014 Baseline	2018 Target
Average number of days between warehouse examinations	365	365
Number of months to administratively settle or refer ocean transportation debts to the Department of Justice	60	42

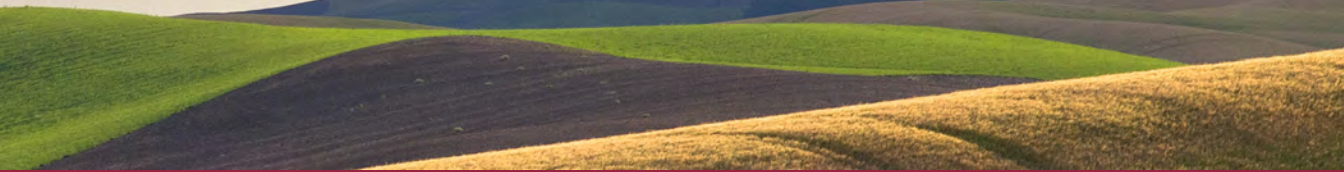


Strategic Goal 4: **Accomplish Our Mission by Effectively Managing People and Service Capabilities**

FSA's mission can be accomplished when operational and administrative business functions instituted nationwide work seamlessly with local level program delivery. Administrative management, information technology, financial management, performance management, internal controls, and various other support functions enable FSA to address customer needs while meeting the Agency's mission with operational integrity.

FSA will continue to strengthen employee competency, performance, and accountability in a culturally open and inclusive environment. These efforts will be initiated through positive communication, in an environment of mutual respect that aligns with civil rights and Equal Employment Opportunity best practices at all levels of the Agency. FSA will use a variety of traditional and technology-based approaches to reach customers to assure open, transparent, and broadly distributed access to programs and services.

FSA is developing new approaches to engage its workforce to more effectively manage business and program operations. For example, acknowledging that the influence of the first-line supervisor as key to an employee's success, the Agency is developing new management performance standards for employee engagement. To gain insight and feedback throughout the Agency, FSA has established a new employee engagement team who are collectively reviewing and recommending updated approaches to enhance employee engagement at the field and headquarters levels. The purpose of these efforts is to strengthen staff-involved decision making and workforce involvement, integration, and collaboration, and the benefits are beginning to show. In 2015, FSA moved up in the Partnership for Public Service's ranking of the Best Places to Work in the Federal Government.

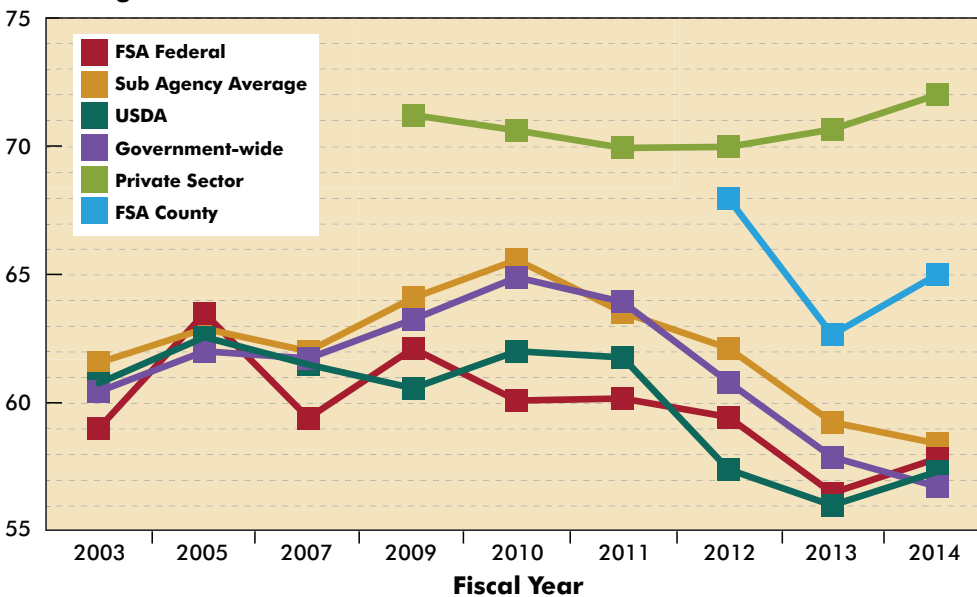


Objective 4.1: Invest in the Workforce

FSA currently employs over 12,000 people at local, State, and national offices. By 2017, over 50 percent of FSA's workforce will be eligible to retire. The expected changes to FSA's workforce may present challenges to the Agency's ability to accomplish its mission. FSA will strengthen employee engagement by seeking feedback from its personnel and invest in the workforce. New human capital initiatives designed to seek, strengthen, and retain high quality personnel are imperative to FSA's ongoing ability to achieve its mission. One such initiative is implementation of a comprehensive training program for new supervisors that addresses supervisory, leadership, and management skills.

Employee Satisfaction: Comparing FSA to Other Federal, Local and Private Organizations

Percentage

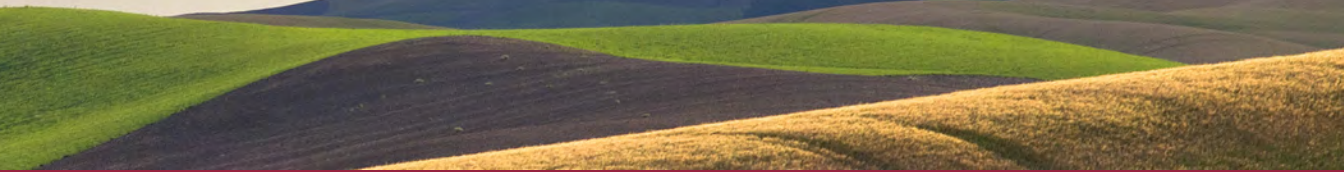




Strategy 1: Strengthen Leadership and Employee Development

Building the performance of an organization requires an investment in the growth and development of its workforce to assure their understanding of customer, stakeholder, and organizational needs. FSA will continue to provide first-rate customer service while attempting to preserve employee retention through effective employee engagement and career growth approaches. Leadership competencies will align with USDA and Office of Personnel Management policies across the organization, emphasizing key human resource strategies such as succession planning, knowledge and change management, operational integrity, and ethics as well as the benefits associated with strong communications, employee engagement activities, and continuous learning.

For example, one employee engagement approach that can bring multiple benefits involves expanding employee roles in program management decision making. This approach on its own can tap the creative capabilities of many FSA's employees when applied in a communicative work environment. Enabling employees to participate and later recognizing their role in program management decisions benefits FSA and its personnel by acknowledging their abilities to innovate new solutions to ongoing operational challenges. Once challenges are met, this approach brings forward new ideas in employee training and leadership, as well as job satisfaction.



Strategy 2: Enhance Diversity and Inclusion and Ensure Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO)

FSA has redesigned its Special Emphasis Program including engagement and training of Special Emphasis Coordinators in the field and seeks to identify best practices in observances and related activities at all levels of the Agency. Further, FSA will raise employee awareness of the importance of diversity and multicultural range to demonstrate its commitment to being a model EEO workplace. This strategy ensures FSA's workforce functions as a unified group that acknowledges the differences that identify backgrounds as unique and appreciates similarities that allow a strengthened commitment to working together.

FSA's Civil Rights and Human Resource offices collaborate to ensure that employees and potential employees overall are afforded equal opportunities in employment, promotion, recognition, training, and development. A Human Capital Strategic Plan is in place and will be enhanced by the Agency's Human Capital Operational Plan that clearly reflects civil rights/ EEO representation including fostering a highly-skilled workforce engaged in continuous learning. While EEO complaint filings serve as a check-and-balance on how well the Agency is meeting its civil rights and EEO obligations, continuing efforts will focus on preventing EEO complaints at the source by making sure there is equal opportunity for all who seek employment and advancement across the Agency.

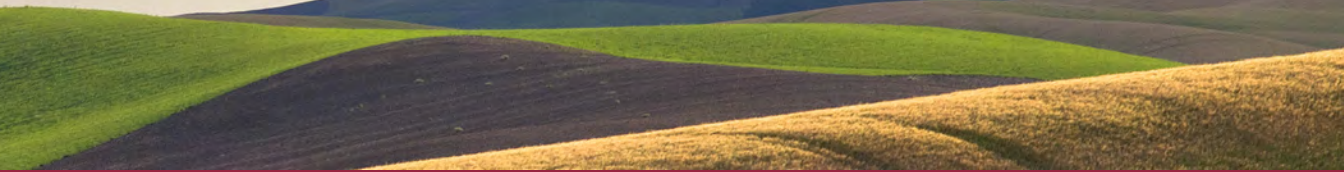




Strategy 3: Expand Work Life Balance Options

FSA recognizes the importance of work/life balance as an important driver for the health, productivity, and creativity of Agency employees. The time limitations and the stresses of increasing program priorities, evolving special initiatives, long distance travel and extended commutes can take a toll on employees' personal lives and must be taken into account when developing balanced work-life programs and policies.

Relying upon workforce flexibilities including alternative work schedules and telework, family leave, and remote worksite opportunities may present new challenges for managers and human capital practitioners who are responsible for both mission accomplishment and maximizing workforce effectiveness. Designing useful management policies to support a changing work environment as well as the achievement of program outcomes will serve as a critical step when applying new work life balance options. FSA has started by evaluating new work life initiatives now available to the workforce and by setting targets to meet the requirements of the Telework Enhancement Act of 2010 as a major policy and practice driver over the next several years.

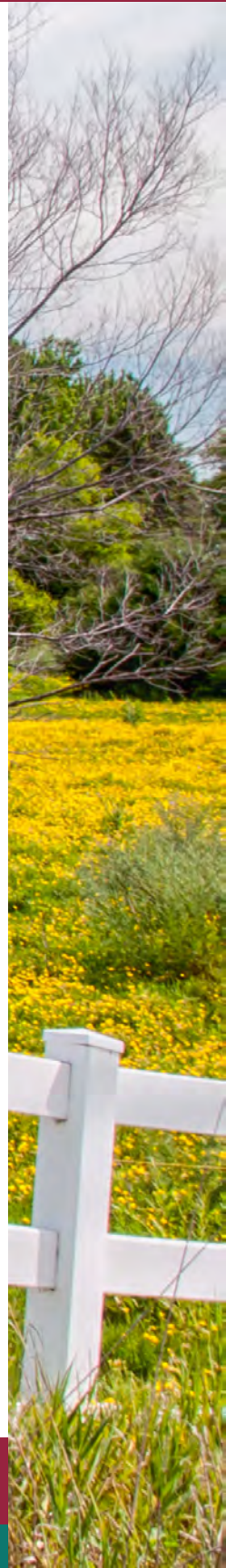


Strategy 4: Develop and Implement Succession Planning and Recruitment Strategies

FSA will identify existing competencies and determine what additional competencies and skills are needed to carry out the Agency's mission. Given the large number of potential retirements over the next few years in leadership and key positions (i.e. mission critical occupations) establishing effective succession planning processes is a critical need for the Agency. FSA must assess skill gaps of its existing workforce in order to determine training needs, while establishing recruitment strategies to enable the Agency to attract top talent. The ability for FSA to retain, recruit, and develop a diverse, well-qualified workforce to execute its mission depends on a fully integrated workforce management program. FSA will engage managers in developing appropriate strategies to ensure the Agency hires and retains people with the right skills to excel in meeting current and future challenges.

Strategy 5: Strengthen Employee Recognition Efforts

Recognition is one of many management approaches that influence employee morale. To enhance morale within FSA, the Agency will develop immediate and longer term employee recognition options for managers to use in a flexible way to acknowledge employee achievement. When combined with work-life balance options and succession planning, the new recognition efforts can have a dramatic impact on employee satisfaction. Strengthening the employee recognition program is an important tool for improving employee retention and contributes to employee satisfaction, increased performance, and accountability.





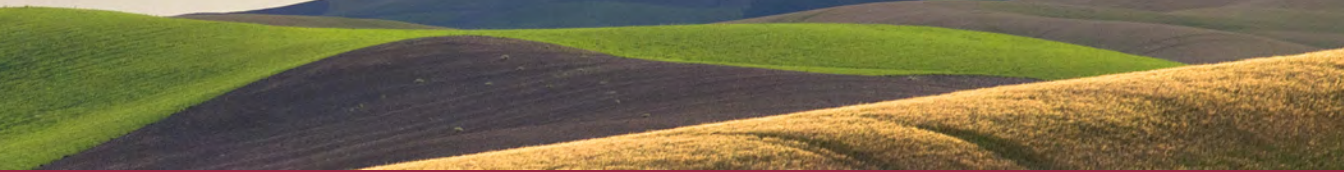
Objective 4.2: Increase Operational Effectiveness

With continued tight budgets and expanding responsibilities, FSA must have effective, efficient, and strategically-aligned business processes that integrate and capitalize on the Agency's existing human capital resources. FSA will continue efforts to build greater efficiency in its service delivery and performance of quality operational support in providing continuity of financial services. FSA expects to build greater efficiency in its operations and service delivery, as process improvement plans are fully executed. Core business and financial operations and technology delivery will be streamlined and improved to ensure that services are measured to reflect benefits to both internal and external customers.

Strategy 1: Strengthen Core Financial and Business Processes

FSA will evaluate opportunities to increase efficiencies in Agency-wide financial processes and solutions while continuing to deliver timely, accurate and relevant budget, financial and analytical information and procedural guidance to our customers and stakeholders. Through this effort, FSA will develop standard financial management processes and requirements for integrated solutions to accommodate current and future technological and business challenges, while ensuring transparency and accountability of administrative costs.

FSA is embracing Continuous Process Improvement (CPI) as a proven management approach to establish a sustainable culture and practice that promotes organizational effectiveness and efficiencies in delivering programs and services. FSA is establishing a CPI Office to ensure consistent application of CPI methodologies and facilitate project management of CPI initiatives. This will allow for better oversight and management



of project implementation, reporting, spend and cost savings, and ensures CPI projects are aligned and linked to FSA's strategic goals and objectives. CPI will increase FSA's ability to generate return on investment, encourage collaboration across program offices, USDA, and Federal contractors to create best-in-class, measurable solutions.

Strategy 2: Implement an Integrated Agency-wide Enterprise Risk Management and Internal Control System

FSA is establishing an Agency-wide enterprise risk management process to evaluate and assess the risks associated with accomplishing operational goals and objectives. An integral part of this process is developing an internal controls system to help improve the efficiency and effectiveness of program and administrative operations, the reliability of financial reporting, and compliance with applicable laws and regulations. An important element of this initiative is an evaluation of all existing internal control reviews and compliance functions, which will be designed to eliminate redundancy in review processes and ensure that all key internal control objectives are being properly tested and monitored.



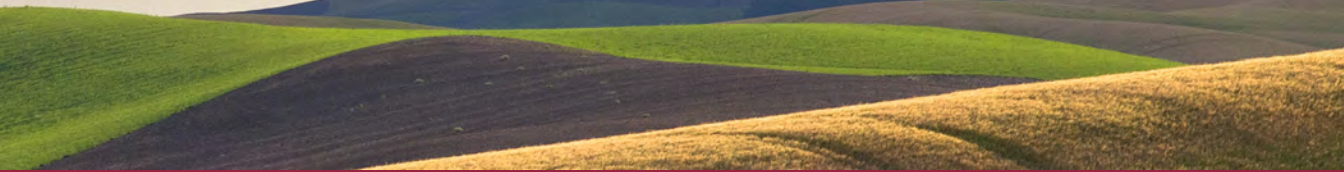


Strategy 3: Improve the Personnel Security and Safety Program

The safety and security of our employees and customers is paramount. FSA employs over 12,000 employees located in over 2,100 facilities across the nation. Maintaining an effective personnel and physical security program is essential to ensuring the integrity and efficiency of FSA operations. The Agency is taking proactive measures to bring its personnel security program into full compliance with Office of Personnel Management regulations. FSA also aims to bring its physical security program into full compliance with the Interagency Security Committee guidelines by FY 2018.

Strategy 4: Strengthen Information Technology Investments and Services

FSA relies upon information technology to complete its mission. FSA's priority is to maintain current IT systems and services to ensure its availability, reliability, security and integrity, while planning and deploying new IT improvements through a host of forward looking initiatives. These initiatives include new business model support, enabling business process improvements through technology, replacement of outdated technology, and expansion of customer-focused operational improvements. Example outcomes include new customer self-service capabilities, improvements in program management and business analytics tools, creating workforce flexibilities, and operational platform consolidation, among others. FSA will adhere to key IT planning and delivery disciplines to cost effectively execute the work required to fulfill priority projects.

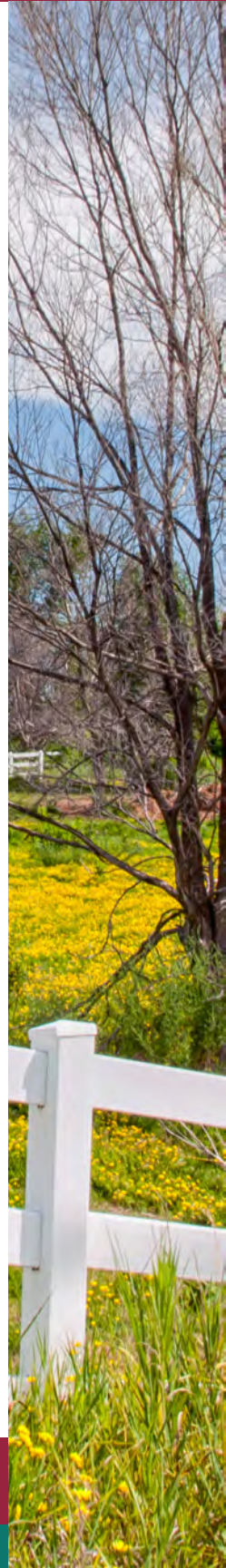


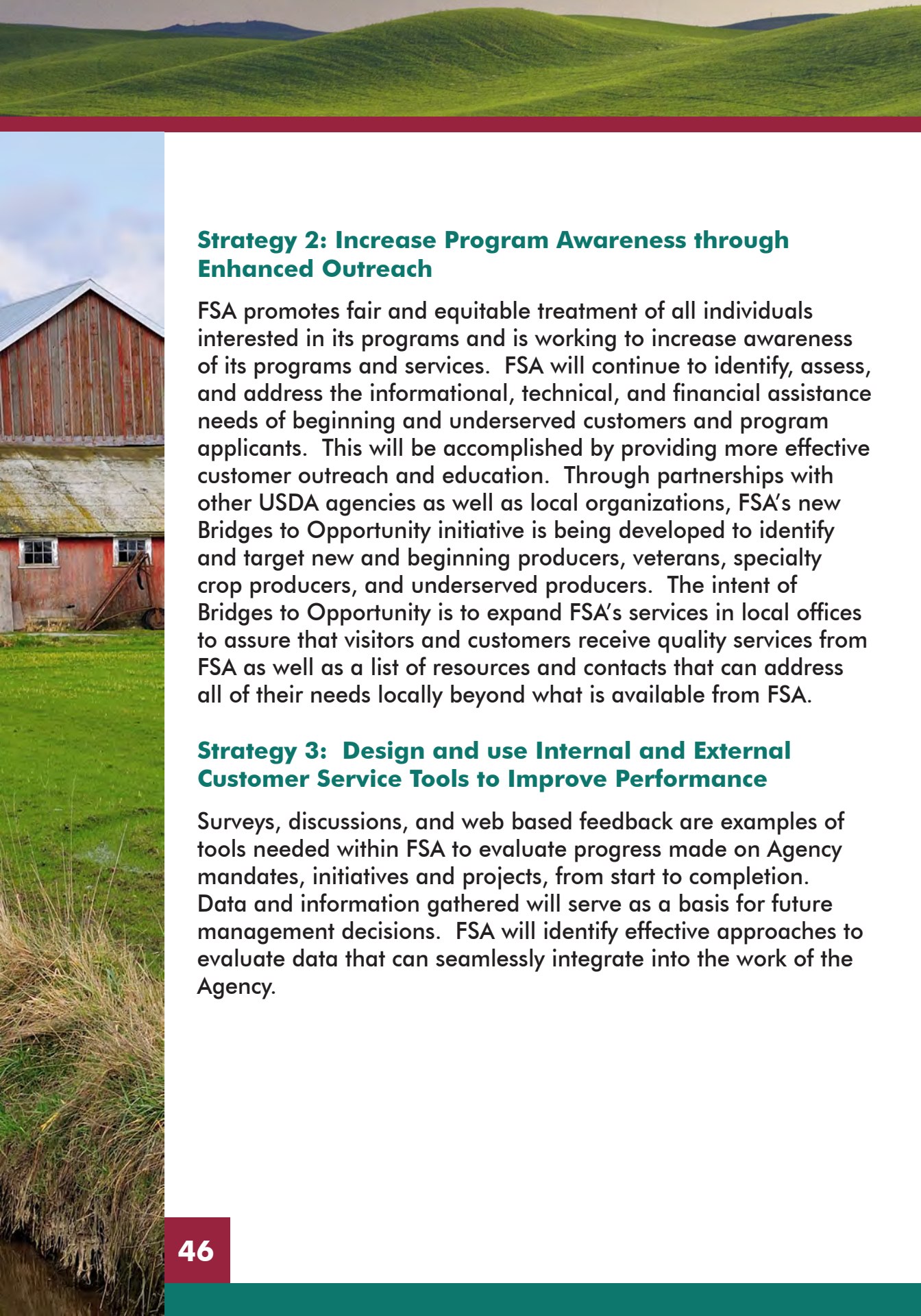
Objective 4.3: Provide Consistently Outstanding and Equitable Customer Service

Customer service is the core mission of FSA. The human capital and operational effectiveness strategies discussed in Objectives 4.1 and 4.2 will improve the Agency's customer service capabilities provided by an engaged, high performing, and results-oriented workforce. To ensure broad and equal access to all programs, FSA will work to expand its footprint in underserved areas. FSA will expand service delivery capabilities to increase awareness of FSA programs and services and survey customers to gain their insights on the level of quality service.

Strategy 1: Expand Service Capabilities

FSA will continue to offer services through its nationwide network of local offices. However, program and service delivery systems must expand beyond the traditional walk-in offices. FSA will ensure that customers are aware of the increasing number of services available electronically and that these services are intuitively designed for ease of use. A priority in this area is the deployment of an all new Agency website which will have an improved customer interface and be completely responsive ensuring its availability to any personal computer or mobile device.





Strategy 2: Increase Program Awareness through Enhanced Outreach

FSA promotes fair and equitable treatment of all individuals interested in its programs and is working to increase awareness of its programs and services. FSA will continue to identify, assess, and address the informational, technical, and financial assistance needs of beginning and underserved customers and program applicants. This will be accomplished by providing more effective customer outreach and education. Through partnerships with other USDA agencies as well as local organizations, FSA's new Bridges to Opportunity initiative is being developed to identify and target new and beginning producers, veterans, specialty crop producers, and underserved producers. The intent of Bridges to Opportunity is to expand FSA's services in local offices to assure that visitors and customers receive quality services from FSA as well as a list of resources and contacts that can address all of their needs locally beyond what is available from FSA.

Strategy 3: Design and use Internal and External Customer Service Tools to Improve Performance

Surveys, discussions, and web based feedback are examples of tools needed within FSA to evaluate progress made on Agency mandates, initiatives and projects, from start to completion. Data and information gathered will serve as a basis for future management decisions. FSA will identify effective approaches to evaluate data that can seamlessly integrate into the work of the Agency.

Strategic Goal 4 - Performance Measures

Description	2014 Baseline	2018 Target
Partnership for Public Service FSA Employee Viewpoint Survey Index	57.8	60.0
Number of days to fill a vacant FSA position	84 days	80 days
Physical security assessments completed annually	210	450
Audit opinion on FSA/CCC financial statements	Unmodified Opinion	Unmodified Opinion
Percentage of program complaint cases settled through Alternative Dispute Resolution	38%	50%
Per capita EEO complaints*	.45%	.40%

* Federal government wide average in FY 2012 (most recent data available) is .54%

Appendix A: Resources

FSA used the following resources to develop this strategic plan, including:

- Program evaluations
- Program leadership feedback
- Office of the Inspector General (OIG)
Government Accountability Office (GAO)

Program Evaluations Used to Develop the Strategic Plan				
Goal	Evaluation/Analyses	Description	What was the Effect	Date
1, 2 and 4	OIG Report 50601-0003-31	USDA Beginning Farmer and Rancher Programs	New oversight of the Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Initiative in place to ensure agencies support the initiative, and developing measurable outcomes and goals.	2015
1, 2 and 4	GAO-07-1130	Beginning Farmers: Additional Steps Needed to Demonstrate the Effectiveness of USDA Assistance	Congress provided mandatory funding for the Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Development Program. GAO recommendations regarding support of the initiative by USDA agencies.	2015
1, 2, 3, 4	OIG Report 06401-0004-11	CCC FY 2014 Financial Statements for Fiscal Years 2014 and 2013	Identification of funds control weaknesses and financial reporting.	2014
3	GAO-14-22	International Food Aid: Better Agency Collaboration Needed to Assess and Improve emergency Food Aid Procurement System	Recommended collaboration between USDA and USAID regarding management of international aid procurements.	2014
1, 2, 3, 4	OIG Report 06401-0003-11	CCC Financial Statements for Fiscal Years 2013 and 2012	Identification of funds control weakness and financial reporting.	2013

Program Evaluations Used to Develop the Strategic Plan

Goal	Evaluation/Analyses	Description	What was the Effect	Date
1	GAO-13-741	Farm Programs: Additional Steps Needed to Help Prevent Payments to Participants whose Incomes Exceed Limits	Review and monitor income verification methods used to determine program eligibility.	2013
1	GAO-13-781	Changes Are Needed to Eligibility Requirements for Being Actively Involved in Farming	Review of the definition of active personal management of a farm or ranch operation, and methods to verify.	2013
4	GAO-12-976R	USDA: Progress toward Implementing GAO's Civil Rights Recommendations	Transmits a briefing given in response to a congressional request for information on the progress USDA has made toward implementing the recommendations in GAO's 2008 report.	2012
1, 2	OIG Report 03601-49-TE	Determined whether foreclosure proceedings with respect to underserved borrowers were consistent and in conformity with the applicable laws and regulations.	The USDA loan foreclosure and restructuring process affecting underserved borrowers were generally consistent and in conformity with applicable laws and regulations.	2009
3	OIG Report 03099-198-KC	Audit of the Farm Service Agency's administration of its port examination process.	Implementing corrective action to address four OIG recommendations pertaining to warehouse licensing, procurement procedures and internal controls.	2008
1	OIG Report 03601-0017-CH	Controls over guaranteed Farm Loan Interest Rates and Interest Assistance	FSA will clarify interest rate requirements, issue guidance and instructions to lenders include interest rate evaluation in oversight activities.	2008



Appendix B: Strategic Consultations

FSA regularly consults with external stakeholders, including FSA's customers, partners, landowners, policy experts, and industry and community based organizations regarding our programs' effectiveness. While consultations of this nature were not conducted to issue a new update to FSA's Strategic Plan, they will be used to complete a full plan for FY 2018–2022. In this update, internal consultations did impact strategic goals, objectives and strategies. Additionally, the Strategic Plan was developed in accordance with guidance from the Office of Management and Budget, the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993, and the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010.

References:

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USDA Management Challenges. USDA Office of Inspector General, August, 2014.

<http://www.usda.gov/oig/webdocs/MgmtChallenges2014.pdf>

Environmental Benefits of the Conservation Reserve Program. FSA Economic and Policy Analysis Staff, 2013.

http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/us_benefits_2013.pdf

Executive Order 13112 of February 3, 1999 - Invasive Species. Feb 3, 1999. National Invasive Species Council, representing 13 Federal Departments and Agencies.

<http://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/laws/execorder.shtml>

Strategic Plan Framework



USDA Mission

We provide leadership on food, agriculture, natural resources, rural development, nutrition and related issues based on sound public policy, the best available science, and efficient management.

USDA Vision

To expand economic opportunity through innovation, helping rural America to thrive; to promote agriculture production sustainability that better nourishes Americans while also helping feed others throughout the world; and to preserve and conserve our Nation's natural resources through restored forests, improved watersheds, and healthy private working lands.

FSA Mission

To serve our nation's farmers and ranchers professionally, efficiently, equitably, and in a manner that is customer, taxpayer, and employee-friendly.

FSA Vision

"We keep America's agriculture growing."

Core Values

- Quality Service
- Continuous Improvement
- Inclusiveness
- Fiscal Stewardship
- Teamwork
- Transparency

USDA Goal 1

Assist rural communities to create prosperity so they are self-sustaining, repopulating and economically thriving

USDA Goal 2

Ensure our national forests and private working lands are conserved, restored, and made more resilient to climate change, while enhancing our water resources

USDA Goal 3

Help America promote agricultural production and biotechnology exports as America works to increase food security

USDA Goal 4

Ensure that all of America's children have access to safe nutritious, and balanced meals

USDA Goal 5

Create a USDA for the 21st century that is high performing, efficient, and adaptable

FSA Goal 1

Provide a financial safety net for America's farmers and ranchers to sustain economically viable agriculture production

FSA Goal 2

Increase stewardship of America's natural resources while enhancing the environment

FSA Goal 3

Ensure commodities are procured and distributed effectively and efficiently to increase food security

FSA Goal 4

Accomplish our mission by effectively managing people and service capabilities

FSA Goal 1 Objectives

- Objective 1.1 Provide Access to Capital
- Objective 1.2 Support Economic Viability

FSA Goal 2 Objectives


- Objective 2.1 Provide Resource Stewardship Opportunities on Private Lands
- Objective 2.2 Target Natural Resource Needs to Maximize Benefits

FSA Goal 3 Objectives

- Objective 3.1 Enhance Procurement Practices for Commodity Purchases and Deliveries
- Objective 3.2 Protect the Interests of Commodity Owners
- Objective 3.3 Improve the Quality and Security of Commodities Purchased for Food Assistance Programs

FSA Goal 4 Objectives

- Objective 4.1 Invest in the Workforce
- Objective 4.2 Increase Operational Effectiveness
- Objective 4.3 Provide Consistently Outstanding and Equitable Customer Service



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